

Dear Friend,

Today, we celebrate the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian. Dedicated to the preservation, and celebration of the art, history, and culture of America's indigenous peoples, the Museum includes artifacts and artwork spanning 10,000 years of history.

New Mexico's Third Congressional District is home to many Native Americans, including 14 pueblos, the Jicarilla Apache Tribe, and a large portion of the Navajo Nation. As a New Mexican, I am immensely proud of the accomplishments of the Tribes living in this State and around the nation.

Tribal sovereignty, self-determination and self-sufficiency, and government-to-government consultation are important to all Native Americans. As a member of the House Resources Committee and the Native American Congressional Caucus, I have always kept the needs of the Native American community in mind while advocating for the federal government to meet its trust responsibility towards tribes and nations.

Native lands are critical for the exercise of tribal self-governance and self-determination. Land is of great spiritual and cultural significance to tribal communities and they continue to rely upon the land for subsistence through hunting, fishing and gathering. This new museum reflects these great traditions.

Although many American Indian tribes have an abundance of natural resources and agricultural diversity, tribes are in critical need of capital, and more efficient administration of existing federal programs. I believe that American Indian tribal governments and Congress must work cooperatively to improve the lives of American Indians throughout the nation. It is our goal to build sustainable tribal economies and vibrant businesses, and I will continue to work directly with tribal governments to find solutions to the pressing problems affecting all of Indian Country, such as providing an excellent education, first class health care, adequate housing, clean water, and economic opportunity.

Throughout this week many of my constituents are traveling to Washington to visit the new museum. I want to welcome them as they come to join in this celebration and to share and honor their vibrant cultures with visitors from throughout the world. For more information on the museum, please visit <http://www.tomudall.house.gov/issues2.cfm?id=9561>.

Thank you for your time.

Very truly yours,

Representative Tom Udall